

# Helping You Prepare for Child Welfare Conferences

A quick guide for Nebraska DHHS employees

Presented by



# Child Welfare Conferences with DHHS participation:

- **PHC** (Prehearing Conference)
  - Typically held soon after initial removal and immediately before first appearance in 3(a) cases.
  - Focus: preliminary safety and placement issues
- **FGC** (Family Group Conference) **EFGC** (Expedited FGC)
  - Available any time; ideally held 5-6 months after initial removal.
  - Focus: garnering support from extended family/friends in developing a plan to stop the abuse/neglect; set expectations for consequences of plan is not followed.
- **PHPR** (Prehearing Permanency Review)
  - Ideally held 10-months after initial removal in preparation for the 12-month permanency review
- **PHTPR** (Prehearing Termination of Parental Rights)
  - Held prior to a termination hearing to explore permanency next steps

DHHS may also be asked to participate in Mediations or Facilitations with clients.

# PHC – Prehearing Conference

Information DHHS may be asked to provide:

- details regarding legal parents
- court orders that may be in effect
- ICWA - tribe enrollment or eligibility for enrollment
- details on current placement
- thoughts about future placement
- current or planned visitation schedule
- information regarding safety plan
- provision of services identified as beneficial for the children or family members
- information about needs of the children

# FGC– Family Group Conference

AT REFERRAL: The designated caseworker will meet with the FGC coordinator to:

- discuss family strengths
- strategize on presenting concerns in a way they can be received by the family
- discuss possible resources that can be offered to the family
- establish department "bottom lines" given the risk factors
- make facilitator aware of the key risk factors that must be addressed in the family plan
- discuss the status of the court case
- identify those who should participate in

# FGC– Family Group Conference

AT CONFERENCE: The designated caseworker will:

- Will Provide a **brief overview** of why the family was brought to DHHS attention
- will discuss the **strengths** of the **children** and of the **family**
- share what **worries** DHHS about the **care** of the **children**, their **future**, etc.
- **present** the **bottom lines/critical issues**; these become the outline the family uses to develop their plan
- **provide feedback** to the family if the plan they create requires **resources** from the state or community
- **sign off on the plan** developed by the family (The caseworker in attendance should have the **authority** to approve the plan, or have **immediate access** to a supervisor who can approve the plan, before the meeting adjourns.)

# PHPR/PHTPR – Prehearing Permanency Review/Termination

## Areas to be Addressed in a PHPR/TPR

1. **Update on the Child(ren):** Placement, behavior, relationships, school performance, services provided to the child(ren)
2. **Services offered each parent** to achieve reunification?
  - This discussion is most fruitful when the DHHS representative attending can present a written list. The **“Reasonable Efforts” list** you use for your **court report** is ideal.
3. In which ways has each parent **taken advantage of the services** offered throughout the case?
4. **Reasons either parent has not taken advantage of services** offered throughout the case?
5. **Additional services that can be offered** to either parent to assist with timely reunification?
6. **Quantity/quality of contact that each parent has had with each child in the family.**
7. When reunification in a timely manner is possible:
  - If realistic by target date: **action plan** with **specific steps** and **timelines for each parent.**
  - If realistic at a later date: what is that **realistic date**; what makes it **achievable**?
8. If reunification in a timely manner is not possible:
  - develop an **appropriate primary permanency plan.**
  - If reunification is a **secondary** permanency goal, **develop** a plan with **timelines** and **action steps for each parent.**
  - If reunification is **not appropriate**, discuss **relinquishment vs trail, adoptive prospects** and **processes.**